

Washington, DC – Congressman Sanford D. Bishop, Jr. (GA-2) today announced that the Department of Labor (DoL) has granted an extension of the CAA MilSpouse program to the 700 spouses at Fort Benning, with \$2.8 million in tuition assistance. Additionally, the DoL included 200 more spouses in the program, for a total of 900 Fort Benning spouses who will receive tuition assistance.

In May 2010 there was an abrupt shut down of the CAA MilSpouse program with no explanation from the DoL or the Department of Defense (DoD). However, the program was extended for seven of the original eight states, with the exclusion of the State of Georgia.

Shortly after learning that 700 military spouses from Fort Benning did not receive an extension, Congressman Bishop took quick action, sending a letter to the Assistant Secretary of Labor, Jane Oates, urging her to extend the resources to the Fort Benning military spouses.

“I would be grateful for your thoughtful reconsideration of extending this grant program at Fort Benning for another year. At the very minimum, please ensure that the 700 current spouses at Fort Benning, who are in the middle of their education and training and are being funded by the CAA MilSpouse program, do not lose this vital assistance,” Congressman Bishop said in a letter dated June 7, 2010. “The CAA MilSpouse program provides the vital support that military spouses need to succeed in their lives and in their careers.”

The CAA MilSpouse program was launched in November 2007 as a pilot by the DoL and the DoD and was designed to help military spouses obtain certification and credentials in high demand, high-growth, portable careers. The program provided flexible education funding accounts that pay up to \$3,000 a year for tuition, fees, books, equipment, credentialing and licensing fees for spouses in eight states.

The CAA Mil Spouse pilot program for spouses of service members were assigned to the following military states and installations:

- California: Camp Pendleton (Marine Corps); Naval Base San Diego Metro (Navy)
- Colorado: Fort Carson (Army); Peterson AFB (Air Force)

- Florida: Eglin AFB (Air Force); Hurlburt Field (Air Force); NAS Jacksonville (Navy)
- **Georgia: Fort Benning (Army) 700 spouses**
- Hawaii: Hickam AFB (Air Force); Kaneohe Bay (Marine Corps); Pearl Harbor (Navy); Schofield Barracks (Army)
- Maine: NAS Brunswick (Navy)
- North Carolina: Fort Bragg (Army); Pope AFB (Air Force)
- Washington: McCord AFB (Air Force); Fort Lewis (Army); Naval Base Kitsap (Navy)

The full text of Congressman Bishop's letter to Assistant Secretary Oates follows:

June 7, 2010

The Honorable Jane Oates
Assistant Secretary Department of Labor
Employment and Training Services
200 Constitution Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20210

Dear Assistant Secretary Oates:

I recently learned of the Department of Labor's decision not to extend the Career Advancement Account (CAA) MilSpouse grant that supports the spouses of active duty service members at Fort Benning, Georgia. As you know, this program has been extremely important and essential to military installations and military spouses. I would be grateful for your thoughtful reconsideration of extending this grant program at Fort Benning for another year. At the very minimum, please ensure that the 700 current spouses at Fort Benning, who are in the middle of their education and training and are being funded by the CAA MilSpouse program, do not lose this vital assistance.

While I recognize there are HOPE Scholarships and Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funding as possible secondary resources, many of the spouses would still not qualify for them. Additionally, it will require spouses to reapply, hereby causing additional stress while their loved ones are enduring their second and third deployments.

As you know, military spouses often like to follow traditional education paths. Their lifestyle, however, prevents them from doing so. Many spouses access online courses as opposed to enrolling in semester-long “in person” courses to better suit their family needs. The CAA MilSpouse program provides the vital support that military spouses need to succeed in their lives and in their careers.

Let me thank you in advance for your attention to this matter.

I would be grateful for your consideration of this important issue, and I look forward to your response.

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